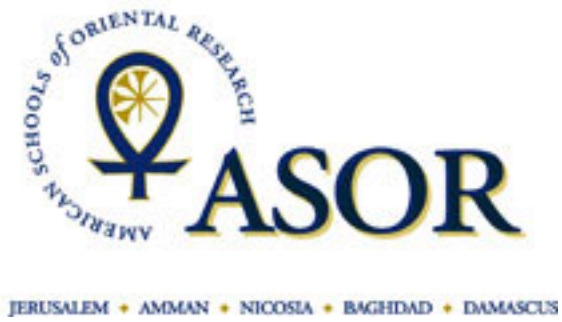

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The Music of the Bible Revealed

By Suzanne Haik-Vantoura; translated from La Musique de la Bible revelee*; 1978, by Dennis Weber and John Wheeler; Berkeley, CA: BIBAL Press, 1991; 557 pp., $29.95 (paper).*

Music theorist and author Suzanne Haik-Vantoura posits a fascinating thesis in *The Music of the Bible Revealed*. By systematically deciphering the cantillation signs (the *te'amim*) that accompany all of the written Hebrew text, she claims to have found the original music of the Bible. From this music, she has constructed a significantly convincing, coherent and comprehensive Hebraic music theory.

Haik-Vantoura's quest began during World War II and has continued for almost 50 years. She has researched every available source that might shed light on a number of perplexing mysteries: What does the music locked away in the Hebrew Bible manuscripts really sound like, and of what importance is it? Do the notational signs embedded in the text give evidence of a truly self-contained theoretical musical system? Is there evidence to show that the music discovered dates to antiquity?

To the first question, one can only say that the music as deciphered by Haik-Vantoura (and now available in recorded form) touches the listener with its "archaic simplicity" in a most powerful way. That a modal music, circumspect, restrained and disciplined, sensitive to every nuance of text, is able to speak to people who are far removed from it in time, is an eloquent testimony to its uniqueness and to its universality. Many who have heard this music agree that it serves to heighten significantly the meaning of the text. Indeed, Haik-Vantoura asserts that the text and music were created by "poet/melodists" as a "gestalt." Hence, the Hebrew Scriptures should be heard, even today, in a similar way, (i.e. as "text/music") in order to fully comprehend the meaning.

Haik-Vantoura has uncovered a musical theory that is amazingly cohesive and truly functional in nature. A hierarchy of value is established between the individual notes of the various modes in somewhat the same way as that established by the Greeks and later by the Christian church. This system, with its tonic, dominant, and subdominant scalar degrees, was found to be remarkably complete without need of additions or adaptations.

The third question concerning the age of this system of *te'amim* is a bit more problematical than the fact of its existence as a coherent system. Not having primary sources to work with, her belief that this music goes all the way back to Moses becomes conjecture, informed though it is. However, her careful handling of secondary sources is excellent and her argument is persuasive.

This well-translated edition is stocked with written musical examples, photographs of cited manuscripts, and copious documentation. Included is a list of available articles, another book, a video-cassette, four volumes of musical scores, and several recordings as well as a glossary of musical terms. In addition, the impressive array of testimonials from experts in the field assure the uninformed reader—as well as scholars, musicians and theologians—that Haik-Vantoura's work deserves serious consideration.

Calvin Johansson
Evangel College

Treasures from an Ancient Land: The Art of Jordan

Edited by Piotr Bienkowski, xiii + 178 pp., Wolfboro Falls, NH: Alan Sutton Publishing, Inc., 1991, copyright by the Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, $26. (Also available in paperback from Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., in Phoenix Hill, Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, England.

To rephrase a well-known dictum, "of making many catalogs of museum exhibitions, there is no end." In recent years, students of archaeology and ancient art have benefitted from the production of many sumptuous volumes that accompanied international exhibitions of artifacts and *objects de art*. Such books are usually characterized by a meticulous concern for detail with regard to illustrations (selection, color quality and layout) and text (content and printing quality). *Treasures from an Ancient Land* will undoubtedly rank among the most useful of exhibition catalogs, since it earns high marks for the quality of its pictures (including two maps and a chronological table) and text. Its eight major essays, written by eight different experts, provide good introductions to various aspects of Jordan's history and culture. But the value of this compact volume, which surveys the art of Jordan in 191 pages, is enhanced by a well-executed editorial policy.

Piotr Bienkowski's hope that this book will "fill a gap in the literature on ancient Jordan" (page x) has been realized, since—in his own words—"for the first time a broad overview is taken of the various art forms throughout Jordan's history, rather than the country being regarded strictly chronologically or geographically" (page x). *Treasures* accomplishes this objective for a wide range of readers—students and scholars of Jordanian history and archaeology in particular, as well as readers with a general interest in ancient art.

Like most archaeological exhibitions of this magnitude, "Jordan: Treasures from an Ancient Land" provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see many of the finest artifacts that have been recovered in Jordan, objects that were brought together—with much planning and effort and at considerable expense—from nine major collections in Jordan, England and France. I saw the exhibition in the Liverpool Museum, and I affirm that this book's 189 color photographs and 25 black-and-white